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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1664
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SUBJECT: NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE CHAIRMAN WELCOMES
RENEWED COOPERATION

Classified By: P/E Chief Ted Burkhalter; reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Ambassador met November 23 with National Security Service (NSS) Chairman Rustam Inoyatov, who welcomed renewed U.S.-Uzbek cooperation. Inoyatov stressed that we share mutual interests in a stable Afghanistan and in fighting terrorism, extremism and narcotics. He stressed his desire to avoid complicating the intelligence mission with the day-to-day of politics, and he repeated his long-standing grudge that Uzbekistan has been, as he sees it, kicked in the teeth on human rights. Inoyatov was downbeat in his assessment of Afghanistan, saying that Karzai lacked authority and was not a leader, and noting that security had deteriorated in the north. End summary.

NSS welcomes renewed "normalization"

¶2. (S/NF) Ambassador met November 23 with National Security Service Chairman Rustam Inoyatov, who welcomed the renewed step-by-step "normalization" of U.S.-Uzbek relations and noted that he had enjoyed warm relations with all but the previous U.S. Ambassador. Inoyatov said that he wished to focus on intelligence and leave foreign policy to others. The U.S. and Uzbekistan share a mutual interest in fighting terrorism, extremism and narcotics trafficking, he said, and he preferred to focus on these issues. He stressed that he would do whatever he thought in the best interests of Uzbekistan and that he would take his decisions independently of day-to-day politics.

¶3. (S/NF) Inoyatov made clear that human rights generally fell into the policy arena. However, when Ambassador raised the issue of torture, Inoyatov defended NSS's record and reminded Ambassador that NSS had in past taken steps against officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) who have committed abuses. (Note: NSS has also in years past taken disciplinary and legal action against some of its own officers. End note.) He registered his feeling that Uzbekistan had provided Washington with invaluable assistance since the 9/11 terror attacks (and before that) and that in return they had gotten "kicked in the teeth" by human rights complaints, especially after the Andijon events of May 2005. He noted, too, that Uzbekistan had allowed UN Special Rapporteur for

Torture Theo van Boven to visit in 2002 and that, in return, again Uzbekistan had been criticized. He asked rhetorically what other countries had allowed van Boven to visit.

Afghanistan not going well

¶4. (S/NF) Inoyatov repeated the Uzbek assessment - which came up as well in Ambassador's November 22 meeting with President Karimov (septel) - that Afghanistan policy was going poorly. He laid the blame largely at the feet of Afghan President Karzai, saying that he was not a leader and that his government was corrupt and his brother a narco-trafficker. Inoyatov, who served as a KGB officer in Afghanistan before and during the Soviet occupation, was distressed that security in the north had begun to deteriorate. He repeated that his service is ready to cooperate with us and said that the Uzbek NSS has a wealth of information to share.

¶5. (S/NF) Ambassador argued that the ISAF mission was intended to buy Karzai the time to expand his government's control throughout the country. He agreed that corruption and narcotics were a problem and that many Afghans were losing patience. On the other hand, most Afghans remained opposed to the Taliban and were eager for NATO to remain, and this gave us hope. The big problem, Ambassador said, was control of the tribal areas in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, from which so many attacks were planned and launched. Inoyatov noted that the NSS has information on this and related problems. He questioned how much longer ethnic Uzbek General Dostum and others in the Northern Alliance would continue to support Karzai. (Note:

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The GOU has had an on-again, off-again relationship with Dostum, but Inoyatov seemed positive on him just now. End note.)

¶6. (S/NF) Inoyatov repeated that he welcomed the renewed normalization of relations and that he was happy with the increased level of intelligence cooperation. He opined that the U.S. and Uzbekistan share a mutual interest in fighting extremism, terrorism and narcotics, and noted that Uzbekistan has a vital interest in a secure Afghanistan - and preferably one that will provide a southern transit route through which trade can flow.

Comment

¶7. (S/NF) Much of Inoyatov's thinking on human rights and on Afghanistan is evident in President Karimov's own statements on these issues; it is clear that Inoyatov either influences Karimov to a significant extent, or has mastered the art of echoing his leader -- or, more likely, a combination of both.
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